

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3 and 4 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended; and claim 2 is canceled.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance (for the reasons discussed herein); (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration (since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution); (c) satisfy a requirement of form asserted in the previous Office Action; (d) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and (e) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

I. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 4,819,987 to Stringer. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Stringer does not disclose "an operation-stopping means instantly ceasing a pivotal movement of at least one of the seatback and the leg rest not damaging obstacles thereunder when a force detected by the strain gauge is larger than a predetermined reference value," as recited in claim 1. The claimed invention recites that an operation-stopping means enables to instantly cease (stop) a pivotal movement of the seatback, etc., not damaging obstacles thereunder.

Instead, Stringer merely discloses a pressure release device which permits retraction of the footrest upon application of a predetermined force (col. 1, lines 40-45). In Stringer, because a pressure release system only allows retracting (not stopping) of footrest, obstacles under the footrest by Stringer might be damaged unlike the claimed invention.


For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is patentable over Stringer. The dependent claims are likewise patentable over Stringer for at least the reasons discussed, as well as for the additional features they recite. Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) be withdrawn.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 3 and 4 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


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